224 identification of these animals). These are the staple food animals, as nearly
262 as any can so be called. Capybaras, kapi:ba, armadillos, atsi:gamo, merun, and mauraima, and anteaters, waremę, are sometimes eaten but are not so
[261] specifically hunted. Monkeys, carnivores, sloths, opossums, and the small rodents are not regularly hunted or eaten except in times of food scarcity. Some allied Indians, even among the Arekunas, regularly eat monkeys but most of the Kamarakotos expressed distaste for monkey flesh.

In spite of the variety of food mammals available, it seems in fact to be relatively rare to obtain one and their meat, however much enjoyed when obtained, is not a staple. Few mammal bones are seen around the houses and the Indians do not claim to be able to procure such game regularly.[110]

223 Birds are more often procured, but still not regularly. They range from
262 the large okira and karmaiba down to the tiny kamata. The principal sorts eaten will be found in the Vocabulary.[1]

224 Among reptiles and amphibians only the tortoises and the larger lizards,
225 ayamaka, are ordinarily eaten, and these not often. ayamaka-eggs are an
262 eagerly sought delicacy when in season and the eggs of practically all the larger wild birds are also eaten. Most Indians eat crocodilians and the absence of these from the Kamarakoto diet is perhaps due rather to rarity and difficulty of capture than to distaste.

222 Among insects the large ant-like bachacos, kaiba', are eaten as are
262 some larvae found in palm trees, tsiya' and iwo. Other insects may be eaten in times of need but are not regular items of diet. Wild honey, tautsan-yeuku,
[231] is much prized but is not abundant enough to be a staple. I did not hear of any
[237] attempts to domesticate bees. Honey is also used for tattooing and beeswax for fastening blowguns together, coating quivers, etc.

Hunting.

224 Hunting, carried on only by men, is a favorite occupation but probably
[462] not a very productive one. One would anticipate that such Indians would be
[433] skillful hunters and certainly all the men engage in this and have abundant paraphernalia for it and many tales of their prowess, but as far as I could check
[129] the actual performance it is not impressive. For instance we employed successively two men who were agreed to be the best hunters in the tribe, arranged for them to have all their time for this, gave them whatever they wished in the way of ammunition, and offered extra prizes for any unusual success, but one of them did not succeed in getting any game and the other drew blank most days and in a week he got only one animal, an acure, that could be considered a
[262] success from the point of view of pot-hunting. I have already remarked on the
[411] evidence that animal food is more a treat than a regular item of diet. We were also unimpressed by such examples of marksmanship, with their weapons or with ours, as we saw.

110 [see footnote on pp. 319-20, category 116 – Analyst]
1 [see vocabulary on pp. 59-61, category 116 – Analyst]

411 [429] For use, a twist of kapok, atsari-kumaːsaʔ, about 45-50 mm. in length, is placed on the dart, leaving about 15 mm. of the blunt end free. The twist is flask-shaped with its greatest diameter nearer the butt end, this diameter being about 12-14 mm., slightly greater than the bore of the blowgun, which is normally about 9-11 mm. The twist of kapok is held in place and in shape by a spiral winding of very fine kurawai fiber. Its function is, of course, to prevent the escape of air around the dart and so to cause the puff of breath to propel it through the tube.

[442] A point on the dart at the posterior end of the poison is placed between two of the sharp teeth of the caribe-jaw and rotated so that it is grooved here and breaks easily.[116] This causes the dart as a whole to break off and drop when it is driven into the prey, leaving the tip with the poison. If a bird is killed and recovered, the tip, called iporosaʔ, is often saved and stuck into the basketwork inside the top of the quiver, as a sort of tally of trophies.

The blowgun is an excellent weapon. The effort of aiming and firing it is slight, once the simple technique of giving the right puff of breath is acquired, and it is extraordinarily hard-hitting and accurate at moderate ranges. Its effective range is about as great as for bow and arrow and its accuracy is much greater, both inherently and in the hands of the Indians. The blowgun is used almost exclusively for shooting birds. The Indians say that the poison is not fatal to cold-blooded animals and that while it will kill mammals the amount carried by a blowgun dart is insufficient to kill most game mammals rapidly. The poison is completely harmless when taken by mouth and the small amount in a bird killed with it has no effect whatever. For that matter although a large amount would doubtless kill a man, the Indians say that a blowgun dart cannot, by its poisonous action, permanently harm a human being and that poison was never used in warfare or for executions. This is confirmed by the trustworthy accounts of travelers in other parts of South America and attacks with blowguns by Indians, or murders committed with them, are mere figments of the fiction-writers' imagination.

[423] 278 411 [171]

411 Farabee says that the Makuchis usually wind the outside of the gun with bark or lianas fastened with pitch and Roth also mentions the occasional use of elaborate wrappings. The Kamarakotos never do this. Koch-Grünberg says that the use of the blowgun requires extraordinary skill and no little strength, but this was not our experience. My wife, who is not unusually muscular and can hardly sight a high-powered rifle, was able to handle a blowgun with ease and we both acquired fair accuracy and considerable range with it after ten or twenty practice shots. It is, in fact, an extraordinarily easy weapon to use well, more so than any firearm, and the usual expressions of amazement at the ability of the Indians with the blowgun seem to me to involve extravagant exaggeration.

224 Ground game is usually stalked or run with dogs and killed with an improvised club, an arrow, or a shotgun. We did not see dogs hunting, but those

116 [see footnote on p. 320, category 116 – Analyst]